

JUN 25 1924

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THE CODE OF THE WILDERNESS

Photoplay in seven reels

From a story by Charles A. Seltzer

Scenario by Jay Filcher

Directed by David Smith

Author of photoplay (under Sec. 62)
THE Vitagraph Company of America of the U. S.

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"THE CODE OF THE WILDERNESS"

Author: Charles A. Seltzer

Directed by David Smith

Seven Reel Drama

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THE VITAGRAPH COMPANY OF AMERICA

SYNOPSIS

Ruth Harkness, accompanied by her Aunt Martha and Uncle Jepson - and also her fiance, Willard Masten, journeys west to live at the "Flying W" ranch which has been left to her by an uncle. On the way there, the party has difficulty in fording a stream and are aided by Rex Randerson, foreman of the ranch. An enmity springs up between Masten and Randerson. Masten recognizes an old friend in Chavis, straw boss of the outfit.

A nester, Catherson, lives nearby with his daughter Hagar. Masten meets her, fascinates her. He tells her that Ruth no longer cares for him. Hagar learns to love him and Masten takes advantage of her. In order to get rid of Randerson, who interferes in his affairs, Masten arranges with one of the punchers to insult Ruth. The puncher does. Ruth tells Masten but he refrains from doing anything - explaining that shooting will ensue. Randerson is told and promptly knocks down the puncher, making him apologize to Ruth. The puncher tries to kill Randerson, but the latter, shooting through his holster, beats him to it. Appalled at the killing, Ruth criticizes Randerson. The punishment was too severe and she tells Randerson that he deliberately goaded the puncher into drawing. Randerson defends himself by telling her that he but ~~at~~ followed the code of the country - giving the other man a chance to draw first.

Uncle Jepson has found out about Masten's machinations, and warns Randerson, but the latter will take no action against Ruth's fiance.

Randerson pays several visits to Hagar's and leads others to believe that he is sentimentally interested in her. He and Ruth discover evidence of cattle rustling and when he explains to her the usual way of punishing cattle thieves, she reminds him of the murder of the puncher, and orders no more hangings on her ranch.

Masten's affair with Hagar has reached a critical state and Randerson learns of the case from Uncle Jepson. He takes Masten to a secluded place and in a fist-fight, Randerson beats the other, warning him to stay away from Hagar. Ruth ~~over~~ overhears Chavis and another outlaw gloating over the fact that they can steal cattle without fear of hanging - and giving her information about the puncher's insults to her. She tells Randerson that she does not feel so harsh toward him as before.

Masten hires another man, Kelso, to kill Randerson, but again Randerson is too quick. Kelso, dying, confesses that Masten hired him. Word of the shooting reaches Ruth and when Randerson attempts explanations without telling of Masten's hand in the affair, she calls him a liar. He resigns from his job. Uncle Jep tries to persuade him to remain.

In the meantime Catherson has found out about Hagar, and believing

Wilderness"

Synopsis

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Randerson to be the guilty man, heads off to find and kill him. Ruth is at Hagar's house and when Hagar learns that it is Randerson that her father is after, she rides to the ranch, barely in time to save Randerson's life and to confess that it was Masten and not Randerson.

Ruth, left alone at Hagar's house, is attacked by Chavis and in defending herself, shoots him. She then faints. Randerson and Hagar arrive and Randerson fires a shot through the door-jamb so that when Ruth, recovering from her faint, is unstrung over the fact that she shot a man, Randerson takes all the blame, ~~says~~ explaining that her shot went wild. Chavis does not die, however. Catherson finds Masten, ropes him and drags him across the desert at the end of the lariat. He releases Masten, but the latter, having learned his lesson, returns to Hagar. Ruth finds out that she cannot bear to have Randerson leave the ranch, and he decides to stay - as her husband.

JUN 25 1924

Washington, D. C.

June 25, 1924

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Washington, D. C.

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CODE OF THE WILDERNESS (7 reels)

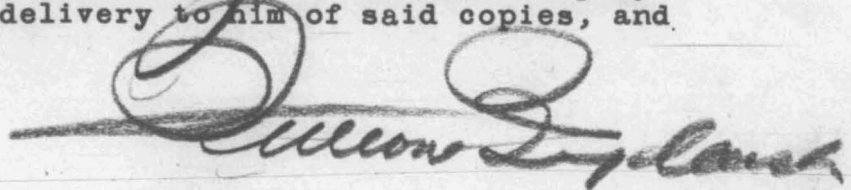
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